

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISTANBUL 0860

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJ: BUSINESSMAN'S VIEW OF CURRENT TURKISH SCENE

1. CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND AND OLD-TIME CAMPAIGN ASSOCIATE
OF ECEVIT'S, WHO RECENTLY TALKED WITH PRIME MINISTER, MADE
FOLLOWING POINTS TO CONSULATE'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
DURING DINNER CONVERSATION MARCH 21:

(A) ECEVIT IS VERY ENCOURAGED BY MEETING WITH KARAMANLIS,
FEELING THAT HE HAD ESTABLISHED EXCELLENT PERSONAL RAPPORT
WITH HIM. THEY DID DISCUSS, IN DEPTH, OUTSTANDING ISSUES
AND FOUND COMMON GROUND. HOWEVER, ECEVIT REALIZES THAT
KARAMANLIS HAS CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES WHICH
FORCED HIM TO KEEP "POKER FACE" FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION,
AVOID MOST PUBLIC STATEMENTS. WORK OF TECHNICAL, FOLLOW-UP
GROUPS TO MONTREUX MEETING THUS WELCOME TO GIVE
KARAMANLIS BREATHING SPACE TO PAVE THE WAY FOR BETTER COOPERATION
WITH TURKS.

(B) ECEVIT WAS GENUINELY DISTRESSED BY NEWS OF VANCE
TESTIMONY, HENCE OVERREACTED. BPAO'S INTERLOCUTOR SUGGESTED
THAT PART OF TROUBLE ATTRIBUTABLE TO MISINTERPRETATION BY
TOO EAGER FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS, THOUGH HE POINTED OUT
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THAT INITIAL PUBLIC STATEMENT BY ECEVIT DID NOT HURT HIM
DOMESTICALLY.

(C) REFERRING TO PRIME MINISTER'S WRIST-SLAPPING OF
LEFT-WING LABOR ORGANIZATION, DISK, SOURCE POINTED OUT THAT
THIS COMPLETELY IN LINE WITH ECEVIT'S POLICY. PURPOSE IS TO
MAKE UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR TO DISK THAT RPP

GOVERNMENT DOES NOT FEEL ANY OBLIGATION TOWARD DISK AND THAT DISK HAS NO CLAIM TO HAVING PLAYED A CRUCIAL OR DECISIVE ROLE IN ITS ASSUMPTION OF POWER. ECEVIT, SOURCE BELIEVES, DETERMINED AVOID EMBRACE BY EXTREME LEFT, INCLUDING DISK. IN PROCESS, GOVERNMENT HOPES REDUCE INTENSITY OPPOSITION CRITICISM WHILE GAINING ADDITIONAL STRENGTH AMONG POLITICALLY NON-COMMITTED, OR APOLITICAL, SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY.

(D) ON VIOLENCE, CONVERSATION PARTNER EXPRESSED OPINION THAT GREATEST DANGER TO GOVERNMENT STILL COMES FROM EXTREME RIGHT, DUE TO ITS ORGANIZATION AND FINANCIAL STRENGTH. WHILE NOT DISCOUNTING THREAT FROM EXTREME LEFT, WHICH HE TERMED INDIVIDUALLY MORE DANGEROUS BECAUSE OF IDEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS, EXTREME RIGHT (KOMMANDOS) FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL SINCE THEY LARGELY LACK IDEOLOGICAL BASE WHICH CAN SUSTAIN THEM OVER PROTRACTED TIME PERIOD.

2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SOURCE WAS ONE OF ECEVIT'S KEY CAMPAIGN ADVISORS DURING 1977 JUNE ELECTIONS, HE HOLDS NO PARTY OR GOVERNMENT POST. HE SEES ECEVIT FREQUENTLY BUT ONLY AS A PERSONAL FRIEND AND CONFIDANT. ALTHOUGH AN RPP MEMBER, HE HAS NO AXE TO GRIND WITHIN PARTY CIRCLES. HE IS A PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN AND HIS ACTIVITIES ARE CONCENTRATED MAINLY IN THAT FIELD.
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